DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The survey has been conducted for the period July, 1999 to June, 2000. The Planning Commission estimates the percentage of persons living below the poverty line at national and state level from the large sample surveys on consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. The last such survey was conducted in 1993-94. As such, the estimates of percentage of people living below the poverty line in Himachal Pradesh for the last five years are not available. These are also not available at district level at NSS consumer *expenditure* data arc not available at district level. As per the latest available estimate, 28.44% of the people lived below the poverty *line in* Himachal Pradesh in 1993-94. There is a three-pronged action to alleviate and reduce the poverty in the country including the State Himachal Pradesh. These are (a) acceleration of economic growth, (b) human, and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc., and (c) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor.

Infrastructure development in North-East

1375. SHRI W. ANGOU *SINGH:* Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have contemplated to allot fund during Ninth Five Year Plan to bring up development of the North-Eastern States in equalising with the national average regarding infrastructure development;

(b) if so, in which areas stress have been given in each State; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Balanced regional development is an essential component of the Indian

development strategy so as to ensure the unity and integrity of the nation. Since not all parts of the country are equally well endowed to take the advantage of growth opportunities, and since historical inequalities have not been eliminated, planned intervention is required to ensure that large regional imbalances do not occur. In respect of the North-Eastern Region where benefits of economic development have not accured in the same measure as in the rest of the country, efforts are being made through supportive measures for the development of infrastructure, both physical and social, in order to enable the North-Eastern States to join the mainstream of the economic development of the' country during the Ninth Five Year Plan. The announcements of the former Prime Minister regarding New Initiatives and also the recent announcements of the present Prime Minister at Shillong regarding socio-economic agenda for the North-Eastern Region, which include a number of infrastructure projects to be implemented *in* the Region are steps in this direction. In pursuance of these announcements, a Central Pool of Resources has been made operational since 1998-99 for funding specific viable projects, especially those associated with physical and social infrastructure in the North-Eastern States and Sikkim. Funds have been released since then from *the Pool* for various projects in the North Eastern States and Sikkim.

(b) and (c) Greater stress has, therefore, been laid on development of physical and social infrastructure, agriculture and allied sectors and also rural development through various Central/Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Projects for the development of Andhra Pradesh

1376. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh during the brief meeting with him in the last week of June, 2000 had requested for several projects relating to the development of the States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps, if any, have so far been taken in this regard and by when are these projects likely to be cleared?